

REMARKS

The present amendment is in response to an office action dated November 29, 2002. No changes have been made in the claims.

5 The Examiner objects to the abstract because it has more than 150 words. The amended abstract has fewer than 150 words.

Claims 2 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,360,037 to Riza. The applicant respectfully disagrees.

With regard to claim 2, the Examiner states that it is anticipated by Figs. 4a and 4b in Riza, together with the corresponding parts of the description. Element (i) of claim 2
10 includes the limitation that the input beam be incident "onto a polarizing beam splitting surface to thereby enable splitting of the input beam into two beam components of different polarizations propagating along different paths." But in Figs. 4a and 4b of Riza, the input beams from ports 1 and 2 are already split into two beam components of different polarizations by the beam displacing prism, labeled BDP, before they are
15 incident on the polarizing beam splitting surface, labeled PBS. Therefore, it is not the input beam, but the split components of the input beam, which are incident on the polarizing beam splitting surface in Riza, and the polarizing beam splitting surface does not enable splitting of the input beam into two components, because the input beam is already split into two components by the beam displacing prism. The beam components
20 incident on the polarizing beam splitting surface in Riza are not split any further, but they either completely pass through the surface, as in Fig. 4a on the first pass or Fig. 4b on the second pass, or they completely reflect from the surface, as in Fig. 4b on the first pass or Fig. 4a on the second pass. Thus, the polarizing beam splitting surface in Riza does not serve to split any beam, but only to direct the components of a beam that is already split.
25 Therefore, claim 2 is not anticipated by Riza.

With regard to claim 6, the Examiner states that it is anticipated by Figs. 3a and 3b of Riza, together with the corresponding parts of the description. However, claim 6 has the same limitation in its element (i) as claim 2 has, and Figs. 3a and 3b of Riza do not anticipate claim 6 for the same reason that Figs. 4a and 4b of Riza do not anticipate claim
30 2. In Figs. 3a and 3b, as in Figs. 4a and 4b, the input beams are split into different polarization components before reaching the polarizing beam splitting surface. The only difference is that in Figs. 3a and 3b, the two input beams are split by two different beam displacing prisms BDP1 and BDP2, while in Figs. 4a and 4b the two input beams are both

split by the same beam displacing prism BDP. In Figs. 3a and 3b, as in Figs. 4a and 4b, the split beam components are not further split by the polarizing beam splitting surface, but each component is directed onto one path or another. Therefore, claim 6 is not anticipated by Riza.

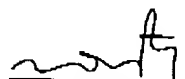
5 Claims 3, 7, 8 and 13-15 stand objected to as being dependent on rejected base claims 2 and 6. Since the rejections of claims 2 and 6 should be overcome for the reasons given above, then the objections to claims 3, 7, 8 and 13-15 are moot.

10 The Examiner states that the other remaining claims are allowed, and states the reasons for allowing each claim. In stating the reasons for allowing claims 7 and 8, the Examiner only recites limitations from claim 7, and for this reason the applicant believes that the Examiner may have mistakenly thought that claim 8 is dependent on claim 7. The applicant wishes to point out that claim 8 is in fact dependent directly on claim 6, and is not dependent on claim 7, so limitations from claim 8 should be recited as reasons for the allowance of claim 8. Of course, since claim 6 should be allowed for the reasons given above, then the reasons for allowing claim 8 are moot.

15 For the reasons given, the applicant believes that the application, including the amended abstract, is in condition for allowance. The applicant respectfully requests a telephone conference, if the Examiner is not satisfied that all of his objections have been overcome. Our toll-free U.S. phone number is 1 877 428-5468. Please note that Israel is 7 hours ahead of Washington.

20 Respectfully submitted,

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